



City of Somerville Job Creation & Retention Trust

Vickie Choitz, Managing Trustee
Anika Van Eaton, Co-Manager

Trustees

Thomas Bent
Jesse Clingan
Lisa Cook
Silvana Dinka
Thomas F. Galligani, Jr.
Colleen Moran
Rand Wilson

Meeting Minutes

Location: Online via GoToWebinar platform

Date: September 14, 2021

Time: 6:02pm

Attendance

- Trustees: Thomas Bent, Jesse Clingan, Vickie Choitz, Lisa Cook, Silvana Dinka, Thomas Galligani, Colleen Moran, Anika Van Eaton
- Economic Development Staff: Jennifer Mancia, William Blackmer

Meeting Minutes

1. Approval of July 13, 2021 Meeting Minutes

- Motion to approve the July 13, 2021 meeting minutes made by C. Moran and seconded by A Van Eaton.
- The motion was approved by roll call vote unanimously.

2. Overview of Contracts, Grantees, and Funding Timelines

- W. Blackmer – all contracts are all on slightly different timelines and different deliverables. As a result were able to move forward with new contracts for some. Renewal is not solely based on contract performance. Board voted on recommended budgets and made allocations based on anticipated funds. Two programs have completed contract terms, The Welcome Project and Bunker Hill Community College. Remaining contracts are completing their contract terms. Board voted to approve a one year renewal with Bunker Hill and the first day of classes was on September 7th. The Welcome Project concluded their contract at the end of August and expecting a final report with deliverables at the end of this month. They are requesting the full amount (\$119,000) in order to augment their curriculum and expand their participation.
- V. Choitz we gave the Welcome Project \$119,000 of which \$30,000 was to be used to design the curriculum and \$89,000 for delivery. Last time we met we had considered \$89,000 for curriculum expansion.
- W. Blackmer the main augmentation of their curriculum is the summer leadership institute. The difference is the focus on teaching leadership skills in tandem with the workers rights curriculum.
- V. Choitz the whole point was to reach as many workers as possible, particularly in relation to the wage ordinance that was passed. TWP developed a decent curriculum after we pushed back. I wanted to see an expansion of that curriculum to cover a few more hours and provide to more workers. I'm not comfortable with this, but would love to hear from the rest of the board.
- C. Moran asked, do we have numbers for participants?

- W. Blackmer year one they met their primary objective of over 100 participants. Those participating in leadership components was much smaller and their second year hasn't started yet.
- V. Choitz have they mentioned any numbers for year two?
- W. Blackmer they were looking for the \$119,000 in order to serve roughly the same number. They talked about serving more individuals in the summer leadership training and an additional emphasis on individual consultation.
- S. Dinka I agree with Vickie, but I believe that the community that they are helping will benefit from this. We can ask them to work more on the curriculum, but I don't want to stop funding that program.
- Anika, there are some comments in the chat.
- T. Bent agreed with Vickie. Concern is the money that was given for curriculum vs program expansion. Would like to see the program tighten up. Average training is too light. It could have been COVID related. Fine tune the training piece.
- J. Clingan this is a new process for this whole board. Why aren't we having them come before us to answer questions?
- V. Choitz it's not something we have had to do, but I think it's a good idea. Clarify what we want to see from the organization.
- W. Blackmer For Year 2, they proposed 125 workers, which would be an increase from 108 from the first year. 20 Graduating participants from train the trainer program. Have seen the augmentation in the leadership components.
- V. Choitz add them to the agenda for the next meeting and do a presentation on their last grant. Overview of curriculum, how many served in different components, and looking forward to Y2, what are they proposing.
- T. Bent ask if training is in person or virtual.
- J. Clingan it just makes more sense to have the TWP come in and explain.
- V. Choitz just want to clarify that not opposed to funding them, just want to reach as many workers as possible.
- SCALE has requested a no cost extension through the end of March 2022, the great news are that their programs are expected to commence in-person later this month and then they will work on placing those individuals during the first quarter of the next year. We are in communication on ways to get the word out. Having some of these classes in person may allow them to overcome some challenges.
- T. Bent on community outreach, were they supposed to do their own outreach? I do realize the City should be able to help advertise.
- L. Cook the profile of some students at level 1 and 2 are largely Somerville. The levels 3,4 and 5 who can take advantage of higher level ed are not Somerville residents. It makes it complex. We carry a waitlist of level 1 and 2 students. The level one and two students cannot attend CISCO and other higher level courses. It has everything to with the reading and math levels.
- T. Bent still have the question for all programs, were they supposed to come up with a plan for outreach?
- W. Blackmer in most of the contracts recruitment is built in. SCALE is a body of the city, meaning we had to undergo a different process entering an MOA.
- T. Galligani strategic push, all of the grantees cited challenge of reaching enough qualified candidates. It raises the awareness and the profile of the jobs trust.
- V. Choitz it sounds like the City is jumping in to assist with outreach.
- L. Cook it really makes it challenging to delineate if the program is only open to Somerville. Having the additional Somerville-only support helps us bolster our numbers.
- T. Bent now that you are staffed up. What is the City's plan?

- W. Blackmer updated recruitment materials, ED newsletter, working on website updates
- J. Mancia working on a multifaceted approach and will present next month.
- J. Clingan how many recipients of the newsletter and who does it go to.
- T. Galligani over 800 recipients, businesses, residents and other recipients.
- J. Clingan where is the opt in for this?
- T. Galligani mostly word of mouth and staff email signature includes the link. Over COVID the list grew.
- J. Clingan as a Councilor would like to help push this as well. Now is a good time to push this newsletter through the Council.
- V. Choitz recommendation is to revisit SCALE at the end of March 2022.
- AACA has also requested a no cost extension through March 2022 in order increase enrollment numbers, placing individuals and proposing two new trainings. Off shore wind turbine training and EPIC software. Enrolled 10 Somerville residents in 3 trainings. So far 4 have gained employment and goal was 15 graduates and 85% placed in an industry related career. Upcoming trainings are scheduled to start in the coming months. Point of discussion is introduction of two new trainings.
- V. Choitz opening up two more offerings can help with recruitment.
- L Cook. Initially AACA was supposed to start at SHS and delayed their program. It's a discussion that has to go through school committee. Janitors have to sanitize the building in the evening and the program had to build a space in their existing programs. Which also hinders their ability to recruit.
- T. Bent the offshore maintenance is great but would like to know if they have done research on this. I think their will be a big need, but want more information. EPIC sounds interesting.
- C. Moran EPIC has become the software of choice in healthcare. It's not automatic to learn.
- A Van Eaton clarification question. They are looking for a no cost extension, but would like to enroll students into these two new trainings?
- W. Blackmer that is correct. They feel better positioned to meet enrollment and other deliverables if included.
- L. Cook Epic is offered at Benjamin Franklin, so there is a little competition there.
- A. Van Eaton I would agree on moving forward on no cost extension
- V. Choitz I think they can email us.
- J. Clingan how are they recruiting?
- J. Mancia exhausted community list and handed out flyers at Assembly for weeks.
- V. Choitz how can we expedite this information?
- T. Bent we have information on EPIC, just curious on the Wind Turbine, employment opps
- V. Choitz approve no cost extension.
- W. Blackmer Just A Start exciting news graduation yesterday and another tomorrow. Their contract expires November 30th. They will have met their deliverable for certificate completion and are working on placements. Delaying renewal until we know about their success in meeting those deliverables. Somerville resident was the valedictorian.
- V. Choitz lets revisit their funding later.
- W. Blackmer Per Scholas less updates this time. They have hit enrollment goal and have requested a no cost extension. We are collaborating on raising the brand awareness. Recommendation is to delay one year renewal and reevaluate performance.
- W. Blackmer, COS staff proposing incremental review of contract timelines to align better with fiscal year, develop a calendar on when grants will be issued.

3. Scholarship Fund Update:

- J Mancia working with CFO and legal department and will provide an update when more info is available.

4. Royal Hospitality Update:

- J Mancia: Update is positive. Been able to communicate with folks and have a tour of the building. We got information needed for our colleague in Economic Development to conduct a building search. Connected them with SCC since they are having trouble finding workers, but SCC hasn't placed anyone there yet because jobs are not desirable.
- C Moran asked, what is unattractive about the job?
- J Mancia replied that it is because of salary
- V Choitz one of the priorities we voted on was some sort of rapid response training for COS staff and coordinated plan to work with CBOs in event of major company downsizing. Now that the team is more staffed up, figure out what we need to do --- whether it is an RFP.
- J Mancia we do have internal mechanisms for rapid response that we need to package together.
- A Van Eaton recalling the future relocation and that employees may have to leave or commute long distance to new facility. They have job openings, how many Somerville folks are employed there now? Are they still an anchor in the city.
- J Mancia they are an anchor, but they aren't the most attractive employer
- T Galligani we received breakdown by zip code of employees. Where can we direct them still within close proximity or an easily accessible location? If not Somerville, can we find a transit accessible location. We have two years to work with Royal. The good news is that we are improving relationships with them and in a much better place in terms of communication. Jenn M. was able to break the log jam and improve communication.

Nexus Study

- W. Blackmer Section 15 of Somerville Zoning ordinance. Non residential development would be required to pay a linkage fee to pay on spaces of over 30,000 sq feet to fund education and training programs to secure new jobs. The 2017 report provided a Nexus study to quantify the demand for affordable housing and the need to provide training. The study recommended the jobs linkage fee. We are starting the process to continue adjusting these fees.
- V. Choitz we accept the results and the City Council sets the rate.
- W. Blackmer this is just to demonstrate that we are considering this reevaluation of the fees.
- T. Bent this was four years ago. This will go through the public hearing process correct?
- T. Galligani yes that will go through the City Council for review.
- T. Bent the linkage fees get included, correct.
- T. Galligani that is correct, but need to keep in mind that if fees too high it will impact development.
- J. Clingan there are a lot of fees to consider and we will have that conversation.
- T. Galligani it is a tedious document, but gives us the legal documentation.
- T. Bent they are not just looking at a singular item.

6. Annual Report

- W. Blackmer written into the bylaws states that every September there will be an annual meeting held by the trust to recap the year. The ask is about voting on shifting the next annual meeting to November to have ample time to see what happens with the grantees who are still wrapping up.
- A. Van Eaton motion to move annual meeting for 2021 from Sept. To Nov.
- J. Clingan support the motion. Grateful to Tom to have Board supported by staff
- V. Choitz roll call vote. Unanimous vote.
- V. Choitz propose preparation at October meeting and then subcommittee meeting a week or so later to prepare speakers for public mtg.
- W. Blackmer report draft to be produced by October mtg.

7. Business not Anticipated


- T. Bent program at BHCC with Eversource through Somerville High School. Pay for Associates in electrical degree. The jobs go to \$100,000. Consider for the future.
- J. Clingan company named Tulip at Assembly in former Kmart Location. Are they expanding or will job opportunities open up?
- T Galligani acquired by Federal Realty. To be repopulated with tech. Tulip develops software for manufacturing. Moving ops over. Also bringing DMG MORI- manufacturer, and Ashley furniture store. Tulip is hiring. City to reach out and build relationship to learn more about openings. Advanced manufacturing program at the high school --consistency with maker initiatives. It would be great to create a partnership with Tulip. Hope to be link between employers, CTE, and community partners.

Next Meeting- October 19th

- V Choitz so far for next meeting's agenda I have (in no specific order): Welcome Project presentation on Year 1 and proposal for Year 2, report out on City marketing plan to promote JCRT, prepare for public meeting moved to November and review draft annual report, scholarship fund update, revisit our budget and see if there are any priorities that we want to fund this fall – Jenn and William to prepare presentation on this.

Motion to Adjourn: 7:51 Motion by J. Clingan and seconded by T Bent. Motion passes unanimously.

Meeting Documents

- JCRT Meeting Minutes 07.13.2021
- JCRT 9.14.21 Memo Overview of Contracts, Grantees, and Funding Timeline 9.14.21
-  JCRT 9.14.21 Summer Leadership Institute 2021 Curriculum (1).pdf
- Somerville Nexus Final Report 9_8_17

Meeting minutes approved on 10/19/2021.